



RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Operator Certification

Annual Report 2010

OFFICE of DRINKING WATER QUALITY

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Secretary, Operator Certification Board

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Introduction

This annual report is prepared by the Rhode Island Department of Health, Office of Drinking Water Quality, (HEALTH). The report covers the period of January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2010. It is prepared in fulfillment of the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act and presented to the Environmental Protection Agency, Region I, Operator Certification Program Office.

This report details the State of Rhode Island's compliance with the nine major program components outlined in the guidelines for the certification and recertification of operators of community and non-transient community public water systems.

For additional information or to obtain additional copies of this report, you may contact:

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Authorization

Regulatory Changes

The state of Rhode Island Board of Certification of Operators of Public Water Supply Treatment and Public Water Supply Transmission and Distribution Facilities (Board), did not amend the Rules and Regulations Pertaining to the Certification of Public Water Supply Transmission and Distribution Facilities [R23-65-DWQ] (Rules & Regulations), during the reporting period. The board continues to meet quarterly to review the applicability and suitability of the rules and regulations. A review of the rules and regulations is presently underway. Initial subcommittee reports were due August 27, 2010. A review of subcommittee recommendations was taken to community review on Tuesday, April 12, 2011 at 1:30 PM. The Board reviewed comments received, and is inviting representatives of the state's water systems to a meeting in September 2011, to review the comments and to clarify the language and intent of the proposed changes.

Classification of Systems, Facilities, and Operators

There are one hundred sixty-nine (169) Rhode Island public water systems that are required to comply with the state's operation certification regulations. The state has classified all of these systems for distribution and/or treatment. Presently, all but one is under the supervision of a certified operator.

Sunset Cove Recreation Area PWS# RI2000053, notified this office that they cannot renew their agreement with their contract operator. This office is presently working with the system owner to determine if the problems are due to a lack of managerial, technical or financial capabilities.

The State's ninety-nine percent compliance rate can be attributed in large part to the continual follow up performed by Drinking Water Quality staff.

OPERATOR CERTIFICATIONS

License Type	License Count
DO Class 1-Full	87
DO Class 1-Grandfathered	41
DO Class 1-Operator in Training	24
DO Class 2-Full	65
DO Class 2-Grandfathered	3
DO Class 2-Operator in Training	6
DO Class 3-Full	91
DO Class 3-Grandfathered	3
DO Class 3-Operator in Training	5
DO Class 4-Full	25
DO Class 4-Grandfathered	2
DO Class VSS-Full	36
DO Class VSS-Grandfathered	25
DO Class VSS-Operator in Training	6
DO Provisional	1

License Type	License Count
TO Class 1-Full	53
TO Class 1-Grandfathered	19
TO Class 1-Operator in Training	19
TO Class 2-Full	61
TO Class 2-Grandfathered	4
TO Class 2-Operator in Training	2
TO Class 3-Full	65
TO Class 3-Grandfathered	7
TO Class 3-Operator in Training	9
TO Class 4-Full	18
TO Class 4-Grandfathered	2
TO Class VSS-Full	8
TO Class VSS-Grandfathered	6
TO Class VSS-Operator in Training	4
TO Provisional	1

Operator Qualifications

The State of Rhode Island's revised operation certification regulations contain a grand- fathering provision; requests were due by February 28, 2003. The State's Drinking Water Operator Certification Board approved all requests through February 28, 2003.

It has been the goal of the state to reduce the number of small system grandfathered operators. There were 112-grandfathered operators in 2010 and 137 in 2009; thirty-one of whom operated small systems in 2010, down from 53 in 2009. Grandfathered operators are often replaced by operators certified through examination due to decisions to retire and or termination of employment.

Water Treatment Operator Qualifications

Information current as of				2011
Is certification mandatory?				Yes
Number of Active Certifications				420
Level Information				
Level Name (lowest to highest)	1	2	3	4
Education Requirements	HS	HS	HS / AS / BS	AS / BS
Training Requirements				
Experience Requirements	6 mths	2 yrs	4 yrs / 2 yrs / 1 yr	4 yrs / 2 yrs
Number of exam questions	100	100	100	100
Passing Score (%)	70	70	70	70
Continuing Education Requirements (Hrs/3 years)	15	15	30	30
Application Review Fee				
Fee to take an exam for the first time	37.50	37.50	37.50	37.50
Fee to retake an exam	37.50	37.50	37.50	37.50
Fee to renew a certificate	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

General Information	
Is Direct Responsible Charge required for certification? (Direct Responsible Charge is active daily on-site technical direction and supervision or active daily on-site accountability of a facility or a major segment of a facility.)	No
How are plants/systems rated (By technology/By flow/By population served)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology
Is Operator In Training certification offered for those who do not meet experience requirements?	Yes
Are substitutions allowed for any certification requirements?	No
Is an exam required for certification?	Yes
Type of exam (Multiple choice; Essay/short answer; True/False; Performance; Combination)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple choice • True / False
How is the exam taken (Paper and pencil/On computer/Internet)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pencil and paper
Are open book exams allowed?	No
Is there a sequential exam requirement? (That is, operators must start with the lowest level of exam, and pass each exam in sequence; they may not immediately take the highest level of exam for which they are otherwise qualified.)	No, there is no sequential exam requirement
Is certification renewal required?	Yes
Renewal interval (years)	3
Note if varies by category or level:	2 year renewal period for operators in training
Notes	No operator in training classification for grade 4 operators. Must qualify for full certification when applying to take

	exam.
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Water Distribution Operator Qualifications

Information current as of				2011
Is certification mandatory?				Yes
Number of Active Certifications				278
Level Information				
Level Name (lowest to highest)	1	2	3	4
Education Requirements	HS	HS	HS / AS / BS	AS / BS
Training Requirements				
Experience Requirements	6 mths	2 yrs	4 yrs / 2 yrs / 1 yr	4 yrs / 2 yrs
Number of exam questions	100	100	100	100
Passing Score (%)	70	70	70	70
Continuing Education Requirements (Hrs/3 years)	15	15	30	30
Application Review Fee	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Fee to take an exam for the first time	37.50	37.50	37.50	37.50
Fee to retake an exam	37.50	37.50	37.50	37.50
General Information				
Is Direct Responsible Charge required for certification? (Direct Responsible Charge is active daily on-site technical direction and supervision or active daily on-site accountability of a facility or a major segment of a facility.)			No	
How are plants/systems rated (By technology/By flow/By population served)?			• Population Served	
Is Operator In Training certification offered for those who do not			Yes	

meet experience requirements?	
Are substitutions allowed for any certification requirements?	No
Is an exam required for certification?	Yes
Type of exam (Multiple choice; Essay/short answer; True/False; Performance; Combination)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple choice • True / False
How is the exam taken (Paper and pencil/On computer/Internet)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pencil and paper
Are open book exams allowed?	No
Is there a sequential exam requirement? (That is, operators must start with the lowest level of exam, and pass each exam in sequence; they may not immediately take the highest level of exam for which they are otherwise qualified.)	No, there is no sequential exam requirement
Is certification renewal required?	Yes
Renewal interval (years)	3
Note if varies by category or level:	2 year renewal period for operators in training
Notes	No operator in training classification for grade 4 operators. Must qualify for full certification when applying to take exam.

Enforcement and Discipline

The Board has the responsibility for disciplinary action against individual operators. The Board may revoke, suspend, or otherwise discipline the holder of a certificate issued under the regulations when it is found that the individual performed his/her duties in a negligent manner that produced a supply below standards normal for the particular facility operated; or that he/she has practiced fraud or deception; or that reasonable care, judgment or application of this knowledge or ability was not used in the performance of his/her duties or that an individual is incompetent or unable to perform his/her duties in violation of Chapter 46-13 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, as amended or regulations promulgated pursuant to 46-13. All hearings and appeals are conducted in accordance with the "Administrative Procedures Act", Chapter 42-35 of the General Laws of RI as amended.

Disciplinary Actions

The Board dealt with no disciplinary cases against individual operators during the reporting period. During 2010 staff instituted a program for tracking PWS violation history in relation to the designated operator in charge. Staff undertakes an annual review of any public water system with four or more violations. The Board secretary then presents the Board with a report that outlines the causes of each violation. In the event a history of violations is determined to be due to operator negligence, the Board will meet with the operator in an effort to uncover a resolution either through disciplinary action or by requiring additional education.

Certification

The Board continues to maintain membership in the Association of Boards of Certification (ABC). ABC provides exam development, standardizing of exams, and exam validation services to the state.

Treatment, distribution and VSS examinations are offered annually in April, July, and November. The state uses the standardized exam format. Exams are held in the auditorium at the Department of Health and proctored by the Operator Certification Program Manager.

Reporting period exam results are provided in the chart below

April 2010

	Distribution	Treatment	VSS	Total
Applications Received	24	14	4	42
Exams Taken	22	13	3	38
Exams Passed	3	5	1	9

July 2010

	Distribution	Treatment	VSS	Total
Applications Received	27	10	4	41
Exams Taken	27	10	4	41
Exams Passed	8	4	3	15

November 2010

	Distribution	Treatment	VSS	Total
Applications Received	16	17	0	33
Exams Taken	16	17	0	33
Exams Passed	8	8	0	16

Renewal

Rhode Island Operator Certification requires that an operator renew her/his full certification every three years. Renewal requires evidence of completed training credits, a completed application, and a signed affidavit attesting to the validity of information provided during the application process. Training credits are issued as training contact hours (TCH).

Contact Hours Required [(one (1) continuing education unit (CEU) equals ten (10) contact hours)]:

Two Year Renewal Period (OIT)	Three Year Renewal Period (Full)	
Class VSS	2 hours	3 hours
Class I	10 hours	15 hours
Class II	10 hours	15 hours
Class III	20 hours	30 hours
Class IV	20 hours	30 hours

Applicants must complete 50% or more of their required training contact hours in technical areas directly related to the operations of the water system employing them and may complete no more than 25% each, in the areas of health/safety and supervisory skills.

There were 171 license renewals for the reporting period.

Training

As noted in previous reports, state personnel provide only limited training. The state does provide extensive opportunities for training and exam preparation through contracts with industry vendors. The focus of our efforts in 2010 has been on utilizing these resources to develop sustainability within the water supplier community.

In order to accomplish this, the state has contracts with:

- Atlantic States Rural Water & Wastewater Association,
- New England Water Works Association,
- The University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension,
- Weston & Sampson, and,
- Horsley Witten Group.

Through these partnerships we have provided:

- technical assistance and one-on-one circuit rider assistance,
- individual and group training and operator certification assistance,
- small water system management guides,
- ICS/NIMS training, and,
- cross-connection control program guidance.

Personnel

There have been no changes to program staffing. Steven Boudreau, is the operator certification program manager. He manages the licensing, renewals, exam scheduling and proctoring, licensee correspondence, and compliance assurance tasks. In addition, he serves as staff assistant to the Operator Certification Board preparing meetings, recording and documenting the agenda, minutes, and decisions of the Board. He also provides applicant eligibility data to the board as well as preliminary course approvals for continuing education programs submitted to the Board.

Other Resources

The License 2000 database is utilized for the licensing of both drinking water operators and public water systems. The database is updated daily as data is collected on licensees, systems and compliance status. The database currently lists 484 systems. The number of certified operators is discussed earlier in this report.

Changes such as license renewal and issuance of new licenses made to the License 2000 database are reflected in real time on the state Licensee Lookup web page at:

<https://healthri.mylicense.com/Verification/>

Stakeholder Involvement

The Board

The Board established by section 23-65-2 of the Rhode Island General Laws, is comprised of seven (7) persons, including the director of the Department of Health, or his or her designee and six (6) members appointed by the Governor. Of the appointed members, one shall be a registered professional engineer engaged in the practice of water supply engineering, one shall be from a list of qualified operators of a publicly owned water supply treatment facility in the state which has been recommended by the executive committee of the Rhode Island Water Works Association, one shall be from a list of qualified directors of a water supply facility who has general supervisory authority for a water supply facility which has been recommended by the executive committee of the Rhode Island Water Works Association, one shall be a representative of a labor union, one shall be a representative of business or industry, and one shall be a residential consumer of water. The Board holds annual elections to name a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Secretary. The current roster of board members is included in Appendix I (page 16).

The Board meets quarterly at locations throughout the state. In addition to regular meetings the Board meets for special sessions as required. General meetings are open meetings and the program manager is responsible for posting meeting agendas on the state website 72 hours prior to meeting dates. Meeting minutes are posted publicly within 30 days of each meeting.

Regular meetings of the board were held on the following dates:

- January 22, 2010,
- March 12, 2010,
- June 18, 2010,
- October 22, 2010

A special meeting of the Board was held on September 24, 2010. This meeting was held to discuss a complaint filed with the Board against Providence Water, PWS RI1592024 by Public Employees' Local Union 1033 regarding the PWSB lead line replacement program and compliance with [R23-65-DWQ]. The agenda and minutes of that meeting are included in Appendix II (page 17-18).

The Board does not maintain its own website. Exam dates, applications and training resources are available on-line through the Health website on the Office of Drinking Water Quality web pages located at <http://health.ri.gov/licenses/drinkingwater/>. Data is managed and updated by the program manager.

Expense Reimbursement Grant

The Operator Certification Expense Reimbursement Grant Program was implemented in Rhode Island in 2003. The program was funded with \$259,600. The grant term expired September 30, 2009 and all funds were expended. Training initiatives continue to be included in Health's work plan and are funded through SRF set-asides.

The Department does not directly reimburse operators for expenses related to training and exams. Instead, HEALTH provides training, exam preparation, and continuing education opportunities through the contracts discussed earlier in this report. Training is free of charge to the operators of small water systems serving populations under 3,300. Courses available to operators included half-day, full-day, and multiple session trainings in such topics as:

- Technical training & very small water system operator exam preparation,
- Distribution system protection: Keeping the contaminants out,
- Sanitary survey preparations & follow-up compliance,
- Sound procedures for drinking water sampling,
- The groundwater rule,
- Backflow prevention essentials,
- Infrastructure replacement planning,
- Regionalism, consolidation and cost sharing,
- Cross connection control / backflow devices,
- Essentials of water utility finance,
- Hand-on valve operations and maintenance,
- Energy management for water utilities,
- The fundamentals of water system hydraulics,
- Preventive maintenance for centrifugal pump operation,
- Chemical feed pump operations, maintenance and troubleshooting and,
- Dealing with hazardous materials

Implementation Schedule Update

The program has not had any significant modifications in the past 5 years. The state strives for 100% compliance and is focused on enforcement, replacement of superintendents in a timely fashion and improving examination pass/fail rates. The reduction in the number of grandfathered operators is mainly due to attrition and certification upgrades.

Appendix I

Rhode Island Department of Health Operator Certification Board

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Appendix II

BOARD OF CERTIFICATION OF OPERATORS OF WATER SUPPLY TREATMENT AND DISTRIBUTION FACILITIES BOARD MEETING

RI Department of Health
3 Capitol Hill, Room 209
Providence, RI 02908
11:00 A.M.

September 24, 2010

A G E N D A **BOARD MEMBERS**

Patrick Hughes	Mike Covellone
Mario Carlino	Don Iannazzi
Robert Bozikowski	June Swallow
Susan Licardi	
Staff Assistant: Steven Boudreau	

Special Meeting of the Board

1. Board Member Review - PWSB Lead Service Line Replacement Program
2. Introductions - Invited Guests
 - a. Pamela Marchand, PE Chief Engineer/ General Manager, PWSB
 - b. Paul Gadoury, Director of Engineering, PWSB
 - c. Kenneth Booth, Director of Transmission & Distribution, PWSB
3. PWSB Presentation
4. Questions & Comments

Time Permitting

5. Sub-committee Regulation Review Reports
 - a. Hughes, Iannazzi - Sections 1.0, 4.0, 5.0
 - b. Bozikowski, Carlino - Sections 6.0, Appendix A, 7.0
 - c. Licardi, Covellone - Sections 9.0, 10.0
6. Other Business

The meeting place is accessible to the handicapped in conformance with RIGL 42-46-2. Individuals requesting interpreter services for the hearing impaired must notify the Board's Office at (401) 277-6867, 72 hours in advance of the meeting date.

**BOARD OF CERTIFICATION OF OPERATORS OF
PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY TREATMENT AND PUBLIC WATER
SUPPLY TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION FACILITIES**

(Pursuant to Title 23, Chapter 65 of the RIGL)

MINUTES September 24, 2010

In Attendance:

Board Members: Present

Mike Covellone Bob Bozikowski
Susan Licardi June Swallow
Don Ianazzi

Absent:

Patrick Hughes
Mario Carlino

Others: Steven Boudreau, Staff, Pamela Marchand, PWSB, Ken Booth,
PWSB, Paul Gadoury, PWSB

Chairperson Mike Covellone called meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

The board reviewed documentation and entered into discussion with representatives from the Providence Water Supply Board (PWSB) pertaining to a complaint filed by Public Employees' Local Union 1033 regarding the PWSB lead line replacement program and compliance with [R23-65-DWQ].

PWSB representatives left the meeting at 10:42a.m.

The board agreed as follows:

- a. Based on the evidence supplied and review of [R23-65-DWQ] it appears that PWSB is technically in compliance.
- b. Operator supervision related to the PWSB Lead Line Replacement Program, can be any fully certified distribution operator and does not necessarily need to be a Class 3 distribution operator.
- c. The board would request that PWSB revise the "Contractors Job Site Checklist" currently in use to specifically address disconnection, sanitation and reconnection of service lines.

2. The board tabled discussion pertaining to regulation review until the next general meeting on October 21, 2010.

3. The Board thanked Chairman Covellone for his years of service as an initial member of the board since the early 1990s.

Motion to adjourn by B. Bozikowski. Motion seconded by S. Licardi
All in favor - none opposed.

This Meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.